

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 9, 2005. Claims 10, 20, 30 and 33-53 are presented for examination. Claim 32 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 10, 20 and 30 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 33-53 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 10, 20 and 30 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested. The canceled claim will not be further addressed herein.

The specification has been amended to conform the Summary of Invention section to the amended claims.

Claims 10, 20 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in paragraphs 3-5 of the Office Action. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 10, 20 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,880,965 (Nakamura).

As shown above, Applicants have amended independent Claims 10, 20 and 30 in

terms that more clearly define what they regard as their invention. Applicants submit that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 10 is directed to an inventory management system including a first storage unit, adapted to store inventory information indicating an inventory number of an expendable used in a printer, a receiver unit, adapted to receive absence information indicating that the inventory number of the expendable is zero or less than a predetermined number, and an instruction unit, adapted to provide a delivery instruction for delivery of the expendable. A second storage unit is adapted to store history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided by the instruction unit, and an information unit is adapted to inform an alarm based on (1) the history information stored in the second storage unit and (2) a new reception of the absence information received by the receiver unit, after the instruction unit provides the delivery instruction.

Among other notable features of Claim 10 are (1) a second storage unit, adapted to store history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided by the instruction unit, and (2) an information unit, adapted to inform an alarm based on (a) the history information stored in the second storage unit and (b) a new reception of the absence information received by the receiver unit, after the instruction unit provides the delivery instruction.

Nakamura relates to a method of controlling a sheet metal machining line for

producing desired products by cutting, drilling, bending and/or otherwise machining flat workpieces according to a machining schedule prepared on the basis of a given production plan. Nakamura discusses manually or automatically entering updating data in response to the need for updating the contents of specified data items in a machine schedule, such as inventory data due to the newly supplied workpieces. (Col. 15, lines 22-29.) Nakamura further discusses an alarm condition determining section for checking if the inventory has a sufficient number of workpieces for machining, and notifying an operator of a foreseeable alarm condition. (Col. 16, lines 9-16 and 41-48.)

However, nothing has been found in Nakamura that would teach or suggest “a second storage unit, adapted to store history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided by said instruction unit,” as recited in Claim 10. Further, nothing has been found in Nakamura that would teach or suggest “an information unit, adapted to inform an alarm based on the history information stored in said second storage unit and a new reception of the absence information received by said receiver unit, after said instruction unit provides the delivery instruction,” as recited in Claim 10.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 10 is allowable over Nakamura.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants’ opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of Nakamura discussed above, as a reference against Claim 10.

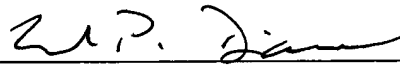
Independent Claims 20 and 30 are method and computer program claims, respectively, corresponding to apparatus Claim 10, and are believed to be patentable over Nakamura for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 10.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are, therefore, believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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